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in Rhenish Prussia in 1688.² Does the entry in *The Term Catalogues* suggest that there was an earlier pirated edition of this dialogue in French, unknown to scholars? Or can sufficient emphasis be placed on the word "written" in the phrase "a dialogue written lately in French" to justify the belief that this English translation was made from the French manuscript of someone who heard Boileau recite the piece and copied it down? Our only alternative is to believe that there was another Boileau, contemporary with the great one (and well enough known to the English public to need no distinguishing Christian name), who wrote at almost the same time a dialogue of which the subject-matter and title must have been singularly like those of Despréaux's work (in order to justify the title of the English translation). It would be rather piquant if Boileau's work had first attained the dignity of type in the English language.

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BRIEF MENTION

Chaucer and his Poetry. Lectures delivered in 1914 on the Percy Turnbull Memorial Foundation in the Johns Hopkins University, by George Lyman Kittredge (Cambridge, at the Harvard University Press, 1915). The Turnbull Lectures on *Chaucer and his Poetry* are more than a notable *fait accompli*; they are also an omen. And it is the significance of Professor Kittredge's book rather than primarily the book itself with which this note is concerned.

The development of Chaucerian scholarship within the last three or four decades has been a peculiarly interesting one. For it has represented a succession of preoccupations, now with this, now with that relatively circumscribed area within the larger confines of a wide and varied field. The conquest of the kingdom, like the winning of pre-Chaucerian England itself, has come through the slow reduction of shire after shire. The emphasis in the earlier days was, as it had to be, upon problems of language and text—the indispensable foundation for any further study whatsoever. Then gradually the stress was shifted to the active quest of sources, and that in turn yielded first place to the minute scrutiny of problems of chronology. To the short-sighted observer (and there has been no speech or language where their voice has not been heard) Chaucerian scholarship seemed to be engrossed with problems—whether of language, text, sources, or chronology—fascinating in themselves, but alien to the supreme end of literary investigation, the interpre-

² See Crane's ed. of the *Héros de Roman*, Boston, 1902, p. 37.

tation and illumination of a great writer's *art*. The objectors have been, of course, both right and wrong. The ultimate end of Chaucerian investigation is the "appreciation" of Chaucer. But such an appreciation, to be valid or adequate, must rest upon a synthesis of the bewilderingly manifold and complex elements that enter into his life and art. Towards that synthesis all the seeming absorption in problems has been steadily tending—sometimes unconsciously, oftener with full recognition of its goal. And of late there have been abundant signs, not that the need for analysis was past, but that the time for at least a preliminary synthesis was ripe. And in the book before us the intensely special and critical scholarship of the past decades has justified itself by its result—a vital and luminous and comprehensive interpretation of Chaucer and his art.

The significance of the book, then, lies in the fact that such an interpretation, alive to its finger-tips, is what it is, not in spite of, but by reason of its saturation with the results of all the minute and special scholarship that has been lavished upon Chaucer for years past. None of this shows. The foundations are where they belong—underground; the builder's paraphernalia are back in the workshop; the scaffolding is gone. To the uninitiated reader the book is a series of delightful and illuminating *causeries*. Yet behind a lightness of touch that completely conceals the erudition, and a humor as pervasive and a vernacular as racy as Chaucer's own, stretch the so-called arid deserts of research. There are paragraphs by the dozen that mask successfully a whole battery of volumes, and an innocent-seeming sentence urbanely harbours you a brace of dissertations. The scrannel pipes of research under Mr. Kittredge's fingers discourse most eloquent music. And the signal distinction of the lectures is precisely their transmutation of the results of rigidly technical investigation into the fine flower of critical interpretation. The hour had come for such a synthesis, and the volume marks, it may be hoped, the initiation of a new stage in the progress of Chaucerian scholarship.

The plan and in large measure the treatment of the book are determined by the fact that it is a series of lectures. It makes no pretense to completeness—although it achieves the effect of completeness more nearly than many an exhaustive treatise. Professor Kittredge assumes four stages of Chaucer's poetical activity—the long recognized French, Italian, and "English" periods, and between the first and second a Period of Transition. From each of these four periods a single work is chosen as typical. The French period is represented by the *Book of the Duchess*; the Period of Transition, by the *House of Fame*; the Italian period, by the *Troilus*; and the final period, by the *Canterbury Tales*. To the *Canterbury Tales* two lectures are devoted; to each of the other poems, one; and a preliminary lecture—a vivid presentment of the modernness of the Middle Ages and the Chaucerianness of Chaucer—deals with "The Man and his Times." Throughout the discussions Mr.

Kittredge brings forth out of his treasure things new and old. Some important contributions—such as the demonstration of the existence of a Period of Transition, and the recognition of the Marriage Group among the *Canterbury Tales*—with which students of Chaucer are familiar in the lecturer's more technical writings, reappear here in a new perspective. And there are fresh contributions as well—notably the illuminating conception of "the Dreamer" in the *Book of the Duchess*, and the analysis of the characters of Troilus, Pandarus, and especially Cressida, in the *Troilus*. But the highest value of the book, be it said again, is not in this or that specific addition which it makes to the sum of our information about Chaucer. It is in its illumination of the whole field by an unsurpassed knowledge of the period, turned to account by a critical faculty which is here essentially creative. What it offers to the larger reading public needs no comment. But it is a question whether it will not exercise an even more powerful influence through its use as an indispensable companion to every College or University course in Chaucer.

J. L. L.

The Assumption of the Virgin: a Miracle Play from the N-Town Cycle. Edited by W. W. Greg (Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1915. 8vo., 75 pages). It is to be noticed at once that this monograph is issued as the first number of promised "Studies in the Religious Drama." The next three numbers of this series, "in preparation," are in advance entitled: "II. The Chester Antichrist Play: parallel texts of the Peniarth and Devonshire mss.; III. The Doctors Play: parallel texts from the York, Wakefield, Coventry, and Chester Cycles; IV. An Essay towards the History of the N-Town Cycle." This is an attractive group of timely subjects, giving further indication of fresh impulses in the study of the Cyclic Plays, by which former conclusions are being revised and new problems set. Such contributions as "The Liturgical Basis of the Towneley Mysteries" (*Pub. M. L. A. of A.*, xxiv, 419 f.), by F. W. Cady, and "The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Play to the Middle English Religious Lyric" (*Modern Philology*, v, 1 f.), by George C. Taylor, are sufficiently illustrative of what may be gained by suggesting new points of view, and by encouraging a suspension of judgment on the final inquiry of how the cycles are related to each other. As shown by his announcement, Mr. Greg is investigating the "History of the N-Town Cycle," for which preliminary studies must be undertaken. He will, therefore, welcome Mr. John K. Bonnell's admirable observations on "The Source in Art of the so-called *Prophets Play* in the Hegge Collection" (*Pub. M. L. A. of A.*, xxix, 327 f.), and he will take minute account of the comprehensive investigation of Miss Esther L. Swenson, "An Inquiry into the Composition and Structure of the *Ludus Coventriae*. With

a Note on the Home of the Ludus Coventriae by Hardin Craig." (Minneapolis, Bulletin of the University of Minnesota, 1914). In the first instalment of his "Studies," which is now published, Mr. Greg deals in a new way with the problem of the forty-first play, *The Assumption of the Virgin*. The text of the play is reproduced from the ms. "as exactly as possible," and "matters of interpretation" are brought together in a chapter of critical notes. The ms. is further represented by two facsimile pages, to show that the hand of the Assumption play differs from that of the main portion of the cycle. Turning now to Mr. Greg's Introduction, he is found to urge the conviction that the scribe of the inserted play was contemporary with the main scribe, the entire ms. being rubricated at one time and by one person. The dialect is minutely examined on the basis of Max Kramer's dissertation (1892), with the result that "whatever conclusions the phonetic evidence may justify as to the cycle as a whole, will be equally valid for the Assumption play in particular." What is strikingly new in Mr. Greg's study relates to the meter of the play, which the rubricator has curiously distinguished by the use of an additional symbol, a small paragraph, at the head of lines that do not belong to the regular stanzas, but are inserted between them. These interstanzaic lines are designated intercalary, and their origin, metrical relation, and organic purpose give exercise to Mr. Greg's skill in conjecture. The play is thus discovered to be marked off by a prosodic feature that is believed to be unique. Mr. Greg's presentation of the matter will attract the eager attention of the prosodist. Finally, Mr. Greg will be thanked for supplying the text of the *De Assumptione* from the *Legenda Aurea*.

J. W. B.

Professor Malcolm William Wallace, of University College, Toronto, has published *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (Cambridge University Press; New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915) which, it is safe to say, will take its place as the standard authority on the subject. The writer has gone to the original sources of information, and he has shown excellent critical judgment in the manner in which he has used his materials. The merits of the work are on the biographical side. In this connection, *inter alia*, the author discusses very fully and satisfactorily the problem of *Astrophel and Stella*—the sincerity of Sidney's passion for Stella, the history of their relations to one another, and the bearing of the sonnets on the different phases of these relations. On the other hand, the number of pages devoted to the criticism of Sidney's works from the purely literary point of view is not very great. The discovery of new biographical materials was hardly to be expected. Professor Wallace, however, has been able to add some new data to our pre-

vicious knowledge of Sidney's life. He has unearthed an account-book of the poet's school-days at Shrewsbury, which sheds some light on his boyhood. He has also shown how at one time the project of a marriage between Sidney and a sister of William of Orange was seriously entertained. In the main, however, he has had to rely upon the old sources of information, and accordingly, the general outlines of Sidney's character, which is admirably summed up in the Postscript to this volume, remain the same as before. The image of Sidney—the "world's wonder," "that rare more-than-man"—as it appeared to his contemporaries, is now irrecoverable, and doubtless would be so, even if the materials for his biography were more abundant than they are. The present faithful record of his career, which was at once so brilliant and so tragic, brings us, however, nearer to a comprehension of the man than any previous biography.

J. D. B.

Dr. Carl A. Krause has recently published in book form four lectures given at the University of Marburg in the summer of 1914 (*Über die Reformmethode in Amerika*. With Preface by Dr. Max Walter, Director of the *Musterschule*, Frankfurt a. M. Marburg, Elwert, 1914. 67 pp.). The four chapters of the book deal with the following topics: (I) A brief outline of the American educational system. Growth and development of the Reform Method. Definition of this method and its application to American conditions. Mode of procedure and presentation of subject in its initial stages, with special emphasis on German phonology. (II) Grammar. Inductive *versus* deductive teaching of grammatical principles. The pedagogical advantages of the Reform Method as evidenced and demonstrated by practical results. (III) Regents' Examinations and Course of Study. A brief outline of what is being demanded by the Board of Regents in the semester examinations in German, and a detailed description of the four-year course in German. (IV) America's contribution to the methodological literature of modern foreign-language teaching from 1875 to 1913. The book offers a concise and skilful exposition of the fundamental principles of the Reform Method (better known as the Direct Method) as applied to actual school-room problems. Being the outgrowth of the author's own practice in one of the high schools of the City of New York, it will not fail to arouse the interest of every progressive teacher of German in our secondary schools, especially since Dr. Krause is known to be one of the most energetic champions of the Direct Method in this country. A sequel to the above is Dr. Krause's "Literature of Modern Language Methodology in America for 1914," *Monatshefte f. deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik*, Vol. xvi, No. 8.

C. M. P.